

SAF/LLZ (Legislative Research Team)

THOMAS, William M. (Republican)  
Representative, 22nd District, California  
Elected 1978 to 96th Congress  
Reelected to succeeding Congresses



#### BACKGROUND

Born: Wallace, Idaho - 6 December 1941

Home: Bakersfield, California

Marital status: Married (Sharon) - 2 children

Religion: Baptist

Education: Santa Ana Community Coll, A.A., 1961; San Francisco State, B.A., 63; M.A., 65.

Military: None

Profession: Political science professor

Political: CA State Assembly, 1975-79. Filled the vacancy created by the death of Rep William

Ketchum (R). Represented 18th dist in the 96th and 97th Congresses. Reelected in 1998 with

79% of the vote against a third party candidate and in 2000 with 72% of the vote. Reelected in 2002 with 74% in the newly drawn 22<sup>nd</sup> District.

Rep Thomas is a pragmatic conservative. Supports NAFTA.

In the 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress, supported the President's request for the use of force in the Persian Gulf. Opposed the reported version of California Desert Lands legislation (H.R.2929) because he felt it restricted military training in the areas covered, and voiced concern that stealth weapons systems such as the F-117A were a "tough sell" during declining defense budgets. Helped secure funds to computerize Edwards' aircraft testing center.

In the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, in July 1997 letter to Sec/Def Cohen, Thomas and 30 others called for the completion of the Vision 1" concept and urged DoD to consolidate its weapons ranges and military R&D labs in the west to what he described as the Southwest Defense Complex. Also opposed the idea of the Air Force consolidating research activities at Eglin AFB, FL, stating that those activities could easily be performed in the west. One of 14 projects line-item vetoed from the FY98 DoD appropriations bill was \$30M in O&M funding for the SR-71, flown from Edwards AFB.

In the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress, discussed the proposed Southwest Defense Complex, to consolidate defense RDT&E and training in the Southwest United States. Said "This proposal would link as many as 12 bases in 5 states (California, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, and Arizona) to work to ensure our armed forces' technical superiority." Noted that western research and training facilities are already cooperating on sharing optical sensors between the navy and Air Force for aircraft tracking devices, testing the weaponry of the F-15 at Edwards AFB against drones at the Navy's Pt Mugu range, and developing the Global Positioning Systems with shared information from all western facilities. Objected to a motion to discharge from cmte a resolution disapproving the extension of normal trade relations to China. Said he was not sure how large a dent some provisions of a Kosovo package would make in the surplus.

In the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, submitted a bill that provided more modest tax cuts for the military than the Senate version. Both provided capital gains exclusion. Sought an add-on of \$9.8 million for Air Force R&D in the defense budget. Sponsored bill that would authorize polling places for military personnel and their families at remote bases.

Additional: Member, Stealth Caucus

AF Bases: Edwards AFB (shared with the 25<sup>th</sup> District)

#### COMMITTEE

WAYS AND MEANS - Chairman  
JOINT TAXATION - Chairman